



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

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FOREST SERVICE RECOVERS \$500,000 FOR COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH FIGHTING THE 2006 LABARRANCA FIRE

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. - The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona and the U.S. Forest Service announced today that they had reached a settlement with the insurer of the Yavapai Fence Company in connection with the LaBarranca Fire which burned private, state and federal land in June 2006. Pursuant to that agreement, the U.S. Forest Service will receive \$500,000 to help cover expenses it incurred in battling the fire.

Diane Humetewa, U.S. Attorney for the District of Arizona, said, "This settlement should send a strong message as we head into the 2008 wildfire season. The dry conditions in our forests have the potential to turn a mere spark into a devastating wildfire. Where these fires are caused by human carelessness, willfulness or negligence, we will use civil, and where appropriate, criminal remedies against those responsible for starting them. The U.S. Forest Service is to be commended for their outstanding efforts in fighting this fire and in investigating the cause of the LaBarranca fire. This settlement is the product of that hard work."

The "LaBarranca Fire" was started on June 1, 2006, when an employee of the Yavapai Fence Company was working on a fence in the LaBarranca II residential community near Prescott, Ariz. A spark from the worker's grinding tool set dry brush nearby on fire. The blaze quickly spread, ultimately consuming 837 acres of forest, 792 of which were within the Coconino National Forest. The fire required the combined efforts of federal, state and local firefighters to bring it under control.

The investigation of this matter was conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Inspector General with assistance from Forest Service, Law Enforcement and Investigations. The civil prosecution was handled by Patrick J. Schneider, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Flagstaff, Ariz.

CASE NUMBER: CV-2006-0665, 2008A5617
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